

Message Text

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51

ACTION H-03

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R 091130Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9847

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

JCS WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

CHIEF, LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS/NAVY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CDR JCRC NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 5326

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, MOPS, LA

SUBJECT: CODEL MONTGOMERY - PW/MIA

REF: (A) CONFIDENTIAL VIENTIANE 5233 NOTAL

(B) CONFIDENTIAL VIENTIANE 5243

(C) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENTIANE 5245 NOTAL

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVE MONTGOMERY DURING HIS VISIT VIENTIANE JULY 4-6 MET WITH PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, VICE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, VU THIEN, DRV CHARGE, SOTH PHETRASY, MINISTER OF ECONOMY, KHAMKING SOUVANLASY, MINISTER OF JUSTICE, MEMBERS OF THE U.S. MISSION, AND HAD INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH SOUVANNA PHOUMA, PRIME MINISTER, GENERAL VANG PAO, MR II COMMANDER, AND MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY, ICC AND ICRC ON THE STATUS OF PW/MIA. IN ALL INSTANCES EXCEPT MINISTER OF JUSTICE, CODEL WAS TOLD THAT ONLY REMAINING PRISONER WAS EMMET KAY. MINISTER OF JUSTICE FELT FROM A STATISTICAL VIEWPOINT OTHERS SHOULD HAVE SURVIVED. KHAMKING
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HAD NO INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THIS CONTENTION. CODEL DISCUSSED

USE OF U.S. FOREIGN AID WITH AID DIRECTOR MANN AND WAS INFORMED THAT AID WAS RESTRICTED TO VIENTIANE SIDE WITH STRICTEST ACCOUNTABILITY. ON AID TO PL CODEL REASSURED BY MANN PL HAD NOT REQUESTED AID AND WOULD BE REFUSED GIVEN PRESENT UNRESPONSIVE ATTITUDE OF PL ON MIAS AND US BODY REMAINS. CODEL REQUEST FOR HANOI VISIT WAS REFUSED BY DRV EMBASSY VIENTIANE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CALL ON FONMIN JULY 4 REPORTED REFTEL A, FONMIN TOLD CODEL AND AMBASSADOR EMMET KAY ONLY US PRISONER AND WOULD BE RELEASED WHEN PRESENT MISTRUST DISAPPEARED. FONMIN MENTIONED RECONNAISSANCE OVERFLIGHTS AND CONTINUED PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND AS FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PRESENT LAOS SITUATION. CODEL AFFIRMED REPEATEDLY CONGRESS SOLELY INTERESTED IN SEEING PEACE ESTABLISHED IN SEA. HE POINTED OUT PW/MIA ISSUE WAS OF GREAT CONCERN OF PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND CONGRESS. ATTITUDE OF CONGRESS TOWARD PGNU WOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE POSITION OF PGNU ON THIS ISSUE.

3. CODEL MONTGOMERY VISIT WITH DRV CHARGE JULY 4 WAS IN CODEL'S WORDS "A COMPLETE WASTE OF MY TIME." REPRESENTATIVE WAS SUBJECTED TO APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR OF POLEMICS AND PROPAGANDA. HE OBSERVED THAT CHARGE WAS NOT COMPLETELY UP ON THE SITUATION IN THAT CHARGE WAS NOT AWARE OF HANOI STATEMENTS CONCERNING ANOTHER GRAVE SITE IN DRV IN ADDITION TO THE TWENTY-THREE EXHUMED AND CONTENDED THAT THERE WERE 24,000 AMERICANS IN SVN. XAT LAO REPORTED IN COMMENT ON CALL DRV EMBASSY SAID THAT DRV CHARGE COVERED THREE POINTS: (1) U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET ENDED MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN SVN. (2) WHILE DRV OBSERVES THE VIETNAM PEACE AGREEMENT COMPLETELY THE U.S. AND RVN STILL VIOLATE IT. (3) IN ORDER TO END THE WAR AND BRING REAL PEACE TO VIETNAM THE U.S. AND SAIGON GOVERNMENTS MUST OBSERVE THE AGREEMENT STRICTLY.

4. ON JULY 5 CODEL MONTGOMERY ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR CALLED ON MINISTER OF ECONOMY, SOTH PHETRASY, CHIEF OF LPF DEL. TO JCCIA, AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, KHAMKING SOUVANLASY, DEPUTY CHIEF OF VIENTIANE SIDE DELEGATION, AS REPORTED REFTEL B. SOTH PHETRASY GAVE THE USUAL VAGUE PATHET LAO RESPONSES TO REPRESENTATIVE'S QUESTIONS, STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE THE PL ATTACH CONFIDENTIAL

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TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "TRUE" CEASE-FIRE BEFORE PROCEEDING TO OTHER MATTERS. SOTH DID REITERATE THAT EMMET KAY WAS THE ONLY U.S. PRISONER. KHAMKING SOUVANLASY STRESSED THE DILATORY TACTICS OF THE PATHET LAO IN THE JCIA WHERE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS WERE BOGGED DOWN ON THE ISSUE OF THE DEPARTURE OF FOREIGN TROOPS. KHAMKING STATED THAT THE PL WERE IN NO HURRY TO COMMENCE DISCUSSIONS OF THE PW/MIA ISSUE AS ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING THE HUNDRED ODD NVA PRISONERS NOW IN VIENTIANE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE

VERY EMBARRASSING TO THEM. WHEN QUESTIONED BY THE CONGRESSMAN CONCERNING PRISONERS OTHER THAN KAY, KHAMKING INDICATED THAT HE FELT OTHERS MIGHT BE ALIVE AND PRISONERS. WHILE HE DID NOT HAVE ANY SPECIFIC INFORMATION HE FELT THAT FROM A STATISTICAL VIEWPOINT OTHERS MAY HAVE SURVIVED.

5. AID DIRECTOR MANN AND CODEL DISCUSSED FOREIGN AID TO PGNU ON JULY 5. IN RESPONSE TO CODEL QUESTIONS MANN ADVISED THAT AID WAS PROVIDED TO VIENTIANE SIDE ONLY UNDER TIGHTLY SUPERVISED AND CONTROLLED PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS WITH STRINGENT ACCOUNTABILITY.

MONTGOMERY MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF USING AID AS LEVERAGE TO CAUSE RETURN OF U.S. REMAINS. MANN REPLIED THAT SINCE AID IS NOW RESTRICTED TO VIENTIANE SIDE ONLY PEOPLE AFFECTED BY REDUCTION AND/OR LIMITATIONS WOULD BE VIENTIANE SIDE PEOPLE. CODEL STATED MIA ISSUE IS OF VITAL CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN AND THAT CONGRESS VIEWS PROVISION OF AID AS A MEANS OF ASSISTING IN RECOVERY OF BODIES. CODEL SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED PW/MIA ISSUE WITH AREA COORDINATORS BUECHLER AND WADLEY WHO CONFIRMED THAT ONLY LIKELY PRISONER WAS EMMET KAY.

6. DURING AMBASSADOR'S JULY 4 RECEPTION CODEL DISCUSSED PW/MIA ISSUE WITH GENERAL VANG PAO AND PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA. VANG PAO STATED HE THOUGHT KAY ONLY U.S. PRISONER AND THAT GIVEN PERMISSION TO ENTER OTHER SIDE HE COULD RECOVER TWO BODIES AT CRASH SITES. PRIME MINISTER TOLD CODEL THAT JCIA WILL ADDRESS PW/MIA ISSUE THE WEEK OF JULY 8 AND THAT KAY MATTER SHOULD BE RESOLVED SOMETIME THEREAFTER.

7. CODEL PRESS CONFERENCE JULY 5 COVERED MAJOR ITEMS MENTIONED ABOVE. CODEL EMPHASIZED IDENTIFICATION TEAMS TO EXAMINE CRASH SITES DID NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE COMPOSED OF AMERICANS. ALTERNATIVES PROPOSED INCLUDED ICC AND ICRC. CODEL MENTIONED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT PGNU IS ELIGIBLE FOR AID FUNDS, BUT QUOTING AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE, "NOT ONE NICKEL INTO CONTESTED AREAS UNTIL WE CAN RECOVER BODIES." CODEL INDICATED HE CONCURS WITH AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT AND FEELS THAT THIS IS ALSO MOOD OF CONGRESS. CODEL LATER REITERATED THAT AID WILL CONTINUE WHERE IT IS NOW GOING AND IN HIS OPINION CONGRESS WILL SUPPORT THE PROGRAM. CODEL STATED THAT PROCEDURES IMPLEMENTING FOREIGN AID IN LAOS, E.G. JOINT SIGN-OFF AND SUPERVISION, ARE MUCH BETTER THAN PROCEDURES USED IN SVN. RESPONDING TO QUERY ON GIBSON, CODEL REPLIED HE WAS AWARE OF MATTER AND BRIEFLY REVIEWED EMBASSY EFFORTS FOR PRESS. HE THEN STATED THAT THIS MATTER WILL BE AN ITEM OF CONCERN IN THE U.S. HE CONTINUED THAT "THIS TYPE OF ACTION WILL BRING IT ALL DOWN."

8. CODEL DEPARTED VIENTIANE 0815 HRS. JULY 6 FOR CONTINUATION

OF SCHEDULED TRIP. EMBASSY WAS INFORMED ON JULY 5 BY DRV EMBASSY,
VIENTIANE THAT CODEL VISA TO VISIT HANOI WOULD NOT BE FORTH-
COMING. REPRESENTATIVE MONTGOMERY SEEMED WELL PLEASED WITH
MISSION EFFORTS AND EXPRESSED HIS OPINION THAT WHILE IT WAS
A TOUGH JOB, ALL IMAGINABLE EFFORTS WERE BEING MADE.
WHITEHOUSE

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